



WEEKLY TREATY REVIEW

21 – 27 October 2005

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ARMS CONTROL (GENERAL)

Congressional Conferees Drop Funding for Bunker-Buster Nuke

Department of State, 26 October 2005, www.usinfo.state.gov

U.S. Senate and House budget conferees have canceled funding for an Energy Department study to design a new generation nuclear "bunker-busting" bomb, says Senate Subcommittee Chairman Pete V. Domenici. (270 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)

Chemical Weapons Tally in China May Be Cut

The Japan Times, 21 October 2005, www.japantimes.co.jp

Japan is considering lowering its estimate of the number of chemical weapons the Imperial Japanese Army abandoned in China at the end of the war, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said Thursday. (182 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Canada to Give \$47M to Russia for Chemical Weapons Destruction

Defense News, 21 October 2005, www.defensenews.com

Canada will give Russia \$55 million dollars (\$47 million U.S.) to Russia to help fund the destruction of Russian nerve agent-filled weapons that could wipe out the world's population several times over, the foreign ministry said Oct. 21. (329 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Army to Destroy Recovered Chemical Warfare Munition at Dover Air Force Base

U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency, 21 October 2005, www.cma.army.mil

The U.S. Army Non-Stockpile Chemical Materiel Project will dispose of a recovered chemical warfare munition that was discovered in Delaware on Oct. 20.

(194 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

VX Destruction at Newport Moves Forward

Nuclear Threat Initiative, 24 October 2005, www.nti.org

The contractor at Newport Chemical Depot in Indiana as of last week had neutralized about 2 1/2 percent of VX nerve agent stored at the facility, the Associated Press reported (see GSN, Sept. 15). (177 words) [Click here for full text.](#)



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COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST-BAN TREATY (CTBT)

Pakistani Premier Says Will Join NPT, CTBT Only Together With India

FBIS, 26 October 2005, in FBIS, Document ID # CEP20051026027271

Pakistan will join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) provided India takes a similar step, said Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. (256 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT)

Iran Won't Yield To U.S. Nuclear Pressure

Reuters, 21 October 2005, www.reuters.com

Iran will stand firm against U.S. "bullying" over its nuclear program but will never use atomic technology to make bombs, the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Friday. (453 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Flexible N. Korea Ready to Engage, Richardson Says

SpaceWar, 21 October 2005, www.spacewar.com

North Korea is ready to return to talks on its nuclear program and would accept a visit by the UN's atomic watchdog, U.S. politician Bill Richardson said Friday after four days of talks in the Stalinist state. (573 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Japan to Join U.S. Nuke Control Initiative

Jiji Press Ticker Service, 24 October 2005, accessed via lexis-nexis

The Japanese government has decided to take part in a U.S. initiative to provide nations with nuclear fuel at fair value in return for their withdrawals from uranium concentration and reprocessing, it was learned Monday. (222 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

U.S. Widens Campaign on North Korea

The New York Times, 24 October 2005, www.nytimes.com

The Bush administration is expanding what it calls "defensive measures" against North Korea, urging nations from China to the former Soviet states to deny overflight rights to aircraft that the United States says are carrying weapons technology, according to two senior administration officials. (847 words) [Click here for full text.](#)



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OTTAWA CONVENTION

Guinea-Bissau: Stockpiles Gone But Landmines a Continued Threat

Integrated Regional Information Networks, 26 October 2005, www.irinnews.org

Guinea-Bissau's government has announced the destruction of its stockpile of roughly 5,000 landmines but disposing of the ones already in the ground is likely to prove far more difficult.

(538 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

PROLIFERATION SECURITY INITIATIVE (PSI)

Japan In a Corner Over Interdictions at Sea

The International Herald Tribune, 22 October 2005, accessed via lexis-nexis

Japan faces a dilemma. Because it subscribes in principle to the Proliferation Security Initiative, whose purpose is to keep weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of rogue states and terrorists, it may soon be faced with a request to assist the United States in interdicting suspect vessels or aircraft bound to or from North Korea. (805 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

TREATY ON CONVENTIONAL ARMED FORCES IN EUROPE (CFE)

40,000 Russian Troops Based Abroad

UPI, 20 October 2005, accessed via lexis-nexis

There are 16 military bases and 40,000 troops outside Russia's border, a closed-door meeting of the defense and security committees of the Russian parliament was told Tuesday.

(120 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

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"The focus will now be with the Defense Department and its research to [develop] earth-penetrating technology using conventional weaponry," Domenici said in a prepared statement October 25.

Washington -- U.S. Senate and House budget conferees have canceled funding for an Energy Department study to design a new generation nuclear "bunker-busting" bomb, says Senate Subcommittee Chairman Pete V. Domenici.

Previously, the Bush administration had asked for \$4 million for the "Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator" study in the 2006 Energy Department's budget and another \$4.5 million in the Defense Department budget.

Domenici, who is chairman of the Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee, said the Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration asked for the project funds to be canceled.

"The NNSA indicated that this research should evolve around more conventional weapons rather than tactical nuclear devices," Domenici said.

The nuclear bunker-buster bomb, which would have been a new generation of nuclear weapons, was being researched by the Energy Department for the Pentagon to determine if a tactical nuclear weapon could penetrate deeply buried targets, such as caves and underground tunnels that might be used by terrorist groups, U.S. officials testified before Congress this year.

Previously, the House of Representatives passed a \$24.3 billion version of the budget in May without including funds for the bunker-buster research. The Senate included the request in its \$25 billion version of the budget that passed in July. The conference committee has been attempting to resolve differences.



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The Japan Times, 21 October 2005, www.japantimes.co.jp

Japan is considering lowering its estimate of the number of chemical weapons the Imperial Japanese Army abandoned in China at the end of the war, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said Thursday.

In 1997, Japan estimated that 700,000 chemical weapons remain in China, with 670,000 alone in Harbaling, Jilin Province, according to a document it filed with an international organization.

Tokyo, however, may make a revision due to later surveys, Hosoda said during a news conference.

The Chinese government is expected to agree to a lower estimate because Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei said in a recent meeting with a Japanese official that China has confirmed a total of 400,000 chemical weapons in 15 provinces, including Jilin, Hosoda said.

The initial estimate was filed with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, an international body set up in 1997 by the countries that joined the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Under the convention, Japan is obliged to dispose of the chemical weapons in China by 2007. It is planning to build disposal facilities in Jilin Province under a joint project with China.



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Canada will give Russia \$55 million dollars (\$47 million U.S.) to Russia to help fund the destruction of Russian nerve agent-filled weapons that could wipe out the world's population several times over, the foreign ministry said Oct. 21.

The aid will allow Russia to buy the essential equipment needed for the completion of a chemical weapons destruction facility for nerve agent-filled munitions at the chemical weapons complex near Shchuch'ye in central Russia, the ministry said in a statement.

"Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew today announced a contribution of 55 million dollars for the destruction of chemical weapons in Russia," the ministry said.

"This project will eliminate approximately 1.9 million artillery shells filled with highly lethal nerve agents," the ministry said.

The ministry said the Russian arsenal consists of 5,440 tons of the deadly nerve agents sarin, soman and VX, which are stored in more than 1.9 million artillery and rocket-launched munitions.

"The artillery shells pose a particular risk because they are small enough to be carried and are thus especially attractive to terrorists. The Shchuchye arsenal contains enough agents to kill everyone on earth several times over," it said.

Russia has the world's biggest stockpile of chemical weapons -- more than 40,000 tonnes. The Russian government has pledged to progressively eliminate the stockpile, most of them left over from the Soviet era, by 2012.

The Shchuch'ye chemical weapons destruction facility is one of six being built in Russia, which currently has only one such facility, in the Saratov region.

The contribution announced Friday is part of Canada's overall commitment of up to one billion dollars over 10 years toward the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, led by the Group of Eight leading industrialized countries, the ministry said.

At a G8 summit in Kananaskis, Canada, in 2002, the seven richest countries offered Russia up to 20 billion U.S. dollars to destroy stocks of military plutonium and chemical weapons and to secure weapons facilities.

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Army to Destroy Recovered Chemical Warfare Munition at Dover Air Force Base

U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency, 21 October 2005, www.cma.army.mil

The U.S. Army Non-Stockpile Chemical Materiel Project (NSCMP) will dispose of a recovered chemical warfare munition that was discovered in Delaware on Oct. 20.

Officials at Dover Air Force Base, Del., requested support from NSCMP after they were notified about discovery of the munition at a clamshell processing plant in nearby Milford. A team from the 22d Chemical Battalion (Technical Escort), headquartered at APG, overpacked the item in an airtight sealed container, in accordance with Department of Transportation regulations, and safely transported it to Dover Air Force Base, where a detailed assessment took place.

Army officials confirmed the 75 mm munition was filled with the chemical warfare blister agent mustard. The item remains safely stored at Dover Air Force Base. NSCMP has successfully destroyed two similar munitions at Dover Air Force Base, using the Explosive Destruction System, which has treated nearly 300 items in a safe, environmentally responsible manner.

A division of the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency, NSCMP researches, develops and implements treatment options and destruction plans that comply with all federal, state and local regulations, and encourages public participation in its activities. For additional information visit the CMA web site at <http://www.cma.army.mil/nscmp.aspx>.



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VX Destruction at Newport Moves Forward

Nuclear Threat Initiative, 24 October 2005, www.nti.org

The contractor at Newport Chemical Depot in Indiana as of last week had neutralized about 2 1/2 percent of VX nerve agent stored at the facility, the Associated Press reported (see GSN, Sept. 15).

U.S. Army site manager Jeff Brubaker said that Parsons Technology, which has already destroyed 6,067 gallons of the nerve agent, hopes in early December to be eliminating three to four 180-gallon containers of VX each day. A total of 1,600 containers are at the site, according to AP.

Craig Williams, director of the Chemical Weapons Working Group, said he is pleased with progress so far. "They're taking it slow and as things go wrong they're stopping and fixing them and then going on. That's the right way to do it," he said.

Meanwhile, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is studying a plan by DuPont to process hydrolysate, a byproduct of VX destruction, for final disposal in the Delaware River. CDC spokesman John Florence said he expects a report on the controversial plan in early 2006 (Rick Callahan, Associated Press/Newsday, Oct. 21).



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Pakistani Premier Says Will Join NPT, CTBT Only Together With India

FBIS, 26 October 2005, in FBIS, Document ID # CEP20051026027271

Pakistan will join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) provided India takes a similar step, said Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz.

"Pakistan is not going to join these treaties so far. Both countries should join them simultaneously," Aziz said in an interview with Interfax in Moscow on Wednesday.

The Pakistani premier recalled that his country developed a nuclear program after India "began conducting nuclear tests and performed a nuclear explosion in 1974."

"We became a nuclear power to avoid destabilization in the region and in order to protect our sovereignty and ensure our security," Aziz said.

The full version of the interview will be published on www.interfax.ru on October 27.



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Iran Won't Yield To U.S. Nuclear Pressure

Reuters, 21 October 2005, www.reuters.com

Iran will stand firm against U.S. "bullying" over its nuclear program but will never use atomic technology to make bombs, the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Friday.

"This nation is not a nation that would succumb to the impositions and bullying of the U.S. or any other," Khamenei told worshippers in a Friday prayers sermon at Tehran University. "The U.S. politicians who claim Iran seeks nuclear weapons know very well that they are lying ... their purpose is to earn dominance. Human rights is of no value to them," he said to shouts of "God is Greatest" and "Death to America" from the thousands of people packed in and around the university.

Washington says Iran's 18-year cover-up of nuclear activities suggest it is trying to build nuclear weapons under the pretext of a peaceful atomic energy program. Iran says it needs nuclear energy to meet booming demand and that its top religious leaders have prohibited it from ever using atomic weapons.

"In the nuclear energy field, our purpose has nothing to do with nuclear weapons, nor would this technology ever be diverted into (making) weapons," said Khamenei, who has the last word on all state matters. "However the Iranian nation will not give up on this technology," he added.

Negotiations between Iran and the European Union over its nuclear program broke down in August. In September the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) passed a tough resolution which brought Tehran to the brink of referral to the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions.

But diplomats have told Reuters that Iran's cooperation with the IAEA has improved since then and that the EU will probably not try to force Iran's case to the Security Council at the next IAEA board meeting in November.

A senior U.S. official called on Iran to return to the negotiations. "Our belief is that Iran should come back to negotiations," said Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns during a visit to India. "They unilaterally abrogated the negotiations with the European three in August."

"Iran is a country that most of the world believes is trying to create a nuclear weapons future. It's also a country that is the leading supporter and funder of the major terrorist groups in the Middle East," he said. He added: "If Iran does not come back to negotiations, then there is every reason to believe that there will be a vote at the IAEA board of governors on Nov 24."

Iran feels efforts to stop it advancing its nuclear program are discriminatory.

"The Iranian nation does not accept that achieving nuclear science could be permitted for one country and prohibited for another on baseless grounds," Khamenei said.

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Flexible N. Korea Ready to Engage, Richardson Says

SpaceWar, 21 October 2005, www.spacewar.com

North Korea is ready to return to talks on its nuclear program and would accept a visit by the UN's atomic watchdog, U.S. politician Bill Richardson said Friday after four days of talks in the Stalinist state.

He said North Korea, which has sometimes made contradictory statements about its intentions, indicated it was willing to re-join the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) and adhere to international standards for its nuclear program.

Pyongyang is due to take part in resumed six-nation nuclear talks in Beijing in November, and Richardson said it was "sending signals of wanting to engage" -- even on the contentious issue of nuclear power reactors.

"My sense is that they want more dialogue with the United States," said Richardson, a former U.S. energy secretary and US ambassador to the United Nations who has now held three meetings with top North Korean officials.

North Korea suspended its membership of the NPT in 1993 and placed limitations on International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections. It withdrew from the treaty altogether in December 2002 and kicked out inspectors.

Richardson, who met Pyongyang's number two official Kim Yong-Nam, said North Korea was ready to return "unconditionally" to the talks and that IAEA officials would be invited for a visit.

"They ... indicated they would at an appropriate time invite IAEA officials, including (director) Mohamed ElBaradei, to North Korea," he said.

The officials "reaffirmed their commitment to rejoining the Non-Proliferation Treaty (and) also adhering to IAEA safeguards," he said.

At talks last month, North Korea pledged to give up its nuclear weapons in exchange for promises of aid and security, the first major breakthrough in more than two years of deadlock over Pyongyang's atomic ambitions.

In return, the United States said it would respect the North's sovereignty and would not attack, a fear Pyongyang had repeatedly said was a main reason for insisting on developing an atomic bomb program.

But after the agreement was announced, North Korea, which is badly short of electricity, immediately said it would insist on having light-water nuclear reactors for civilian energy purposes before giving up its weapons.

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Richardson said North Korean officials "showed some flexibility" in their attempt to gain light-water reactors, an issue he said was not likely to be a "deal breaker."

"They are prepared for oversight of the light-water reactors by the United States, the IAEA or other six-party countries, in terms of co-managing, in terms of having the United States participate in the fuel-cycle at the front end and the back end," he said.

But Richardson said negotiators would have to establish a "very strong regime of verification" given Pyongyang's record of broken promises to international bodies.

The standoff with North Korea erupted in October 2002 when the United States said North Korea was running a secret uranium enrichment program in violation of an earlier deal that had allowed construction to start on two reactors.

Although he did not receive specific responses to his questions on nuclear weapons, the U.S. politician believes the North's claim already to have atomic bombs was true.

"The sense of the response I got was that they have a small number on the lower end of one to five," Richardson said.

Meanwhile, North Korea also promised Richardson to allow 30 international workers of the World Food Program to stay in the Stalinist state, as well as staff from some 30 non-government organizations to provide humanitarian aid. Pyongyang has previously threatened to kick them out.



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Jiji Press Ticker Service, 24 October 2005, accessed via lexis-nexis

The Japanese government has decided to take part in a U.S. initiative to provide nations with nuclear fuel at fair value in return for their withdrawals from uranium concentration and reprocessing, it was learned Monday.

By joining the nuclear control initiative, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry aims to obtain international recognition of Japan's nuclear fuel reprocessing program, the core portion of the nation's atomic energy recycling project, government officials said.

The ministry is expected to unveil the plan to participate in the U.S. scheme at Tuesday's subcommittee meeting of the Advisory Committee for Natural Resources and Energy, which advises the METI minister.

U.S. President George W. Bush announced the initiative in February, amid growing concern that the current nuclear management framework under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty cannot fully cope with such a new threat as suspected nuclear arms development by North Korea and Iran.

The Bush plan guarantees supply of fuel for civilian nuclear reactors at reasonable prices in countries that give up uranium concentration and reprocessing.

But it is yet uncertain whether the other members of the International Atomic Energy Agency will endorse the U.S. plan, the officials said.

Some critics warned that Japan's participation in the U.S. initiative could fuel international criticism against Japan's status as the only nuclear-free country that is allowed to enrich and reprocess uranium.



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U.S. Widens Campaign on North Korea

The New York Times, 24 October 2005, www.nytimes.com

The Bush administration is expanding what it calls "defensive measures" against North Korea, urging nations from China to the former Soviet states to deny overflight rights to aircraft that the United States says are carrying weapons technology, according to two senior administration officials.

At the same time, the officials said, the administration is accelerating an effort to place radiation detectors at land crossings and at airports throughout Central Asia. The devices are intended to monitor the North Koreans and the risk that nuclear weapons material could be removed from facilities in the former Soviet states.

The new campaign was speeded up this summer after a previously undisclosed incident in June, when American satellites tracked an Iranian cargo plane landing in North Korea. The two countries have a history of missile trade - Iran's Shahab missile is a derivative of a North Korean design - and intelligence officials suspected the plane was picking up missile parts.

Rather than watch silently, senior Bush administration officials began urging nations in the area to deny the plane the right to fly over their territory. China and at least one Central Asian nation cooperated, according to senior officials, who confirmed the outlines of the incident to demonstrate that President Bush's strategy to curb proliferation, which has been criticized by some experts for moving too slowly, is showing results. The officials insisted on anonymity because they were discussing sensitive information.

The officials said they believed the Iranian plane left without its cargo, but they were not sure. Nonetheless, the new effort underscored the efforts the administration is undertaking to curb the North's exports of missile parts, drugs and counterfeit currency that are widely believed to be its main source of revenue and the way it finances its nuclear program.

In interviews, the officials insisted that the more aggressive tactics would enhance the effort by the United States to continue negotiations over disarming North Korea, which have lasted for two years and resulted last month in a statement of broad principles to disarm, but no agreement about when or how.

"We are taking a number of new steps - defensive measures - that are intended to provide protection against all aspects of the North Korean proliferation threat," said Robert Joseph, the undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, who has been visiting former Soviet republics and other nations to secure commitments to halt flights like the one in June.

"These measures are necessary for our defense and the defense of our friends and allies," said Mr. Joseph, regarded as an administration hawk on North Korea. He also said the measures "are independent of the diplomatic efforts that we are pursuing" with the North that also include China, Russia, Japan and South Korea. "We believe that they will reinforce the prospect for the success of those talks."

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But the Asian allies are divided on that question. South Korea's government, which is preparing for a visit by Mr. Bush next month, has been privately warning against taking steps that would aggravate North Korea. Arguing that "status quo isn't working," one senior administration official said this weekend that "we have to defend against illicit activity that harms America."

Russia has expressed similar concerns about pressuring Iran, saying that such action may force Tehran to show its defiance by resuming the enrichment of uranium.

On Sunday evening, Stephen J. Hadley, the president's national security adviser, arrived here to meet President Vladimir V. Putin and a range of Russian national security officials. The American efforts to exert more pressure on both North Korea and Iran - questions on which Moscow and Washington have been deeply divided - are expected to figure in his discussions... For Russia, it is a matter of business as well as politics: Moscow is selling Iran the technology for a civilian nuclear reactor.

The new administration effort has three components, according to Mr. Joseph and other officials. The first is to block the sale of any bomb material or radioactive material from North Korea. The second is to beef up anti-proliferation efforts, including denying overflight rights.

Mr. Joseph recently visited Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgistan and Kazakhstan, urging them to join a program called the Proliferation Security Initiative, which began as an effort to seize equipment at sea - like the BBC China, a freighter filled with centrifuge parts bound for Libya that was seized two years ago.

"We were inspired by the June incident," one senior official said this weekend, "and we said, 'Let's be more systematic.' "

A third component of the effort is to step up "counterproliferation," which involves preparing nations to counter chemical or biological weapons, and work out ways to defend against a missile attack. Japan, which has grown more hawkish on North Korea, has said it will join the American missile defense program, basing its anti-missile system on ships offshore. South Korea has declined, though it has long made use of the American-made Patriot system against short-range missiles.

One administration official cautioned that "some of these programs are new descriptions of older efforts, with more money in the pot"...



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Guinea-Bissau: Stockpiles Gone But Landmines a Continued Threat

Integrated Regional Information Networks, 26 October 2005, www.irinnews.org

Guinea-Bissau's government has announced the destruction of its stockpile of roughly 5,000 landmines but disposing of the ones already in the ground is likely to prove far more difficult.

A number of areas around the country continue to be plagued by anti-personnel mines and other explosive devices. The majority of these were laid during the West African nation's brief 1998-1999 civil war, although some date as far back as the country's struggle for independence from Portugal in the 1960s and 70s.

"For the time being, our priority is the north of the country along the border with (the southern Senegalese region of) Casamance," Cesar de Carvalho, director of the National Centre for Coordinating Mine Action Activities, told IRIN.

"But because of the lack of security in the area, we haven't been able to start de-mining operations yet."

Senegal's lush southern region has been the scene of a low-level separatist conflict for over two decades and its rebels have, in the past, used Guinea-Bissau's border region as a staging point for their operations. Over the years, this presence has led to crackdowns by government troops and cross-border incursions by the Senegalese army.

Last December's peace accord between the Senegalese government and the main separatist group MFDC has not put the issue to rest, as demonstrated last week when a rebel leader vowed on national radio not to give up the fight until Senegal withdrew from the region.

This uncertainty makes it difficult to implement operations designed to rid Guinea-Bissau of a scourge that has maimed hundreds of people in the last seven years alone and can have an equally crippling effect on the economy if fields and key infrastructure sites are out of bounds.

Money is the other big obstacle to de-mining in a country that desperately wants to lure foreign donors back after being largely shunned in recent years, according to Olivier Shu, director of the landmines project for Handicap International in Bissau.

"You can't exactly say that there are legions of foreign donors in Guinea-Bissau," he said in a telephone interview.

The situation was unlikely to change until the president and prime minister resolved a personal feud threatening the country's stability, he explained.

But to date, Guinea-Bissau's de-mining programme is on track.

The terms of the Ottawa Convention, named after the Canadian city where the mine ban treaty was signed in 1997, require countries to destroy all their stockpiles of mines within four years of ratification.

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Guinea-Bissau, where the treaty came into force in 2001, fulfilled these obligations two weeks before the November 1 deadline and now has six years to clear all the mines that have been laid throughout the country.

Despite chronic instability and a devastated economy, the government remains optimistic that it will soon finish cleaning up the region around the capital and that the whole country will be mine-free by 2009, two years ahead of the Ottawa Convention's timetable.

Handicap International's Shu thinks such a schedule is possible for such a small country as long as there is enough money to complete the process which he calls a precondition for growth and development.

"A country that's affected by mines is a country that can't make progress," he said. "It's a country that's dying."



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Japan In a Corner Over Interdictions at Sea

The International Herald Tribune, 22 October 2005, accessed via lexis-nexis

Japan faces a dilemma. Because it subscribes in principle to the Proliferation Security Initiative, whose purpose is to keep weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of rogue states and terrorists, it may soon be faced with a request to assist the United States in interdicting suspect vessels or aircraft bound to or from North Korea.

Visibly participating in an interdiction would almost certainly anger China and North Korea, and alarm South Korea. It would also contribute to an activity that some say is undermining the United Nations system, which Japan needs to be seen to support. But to refuse to respond or assist would anger the United States and possibly damage the alliance.

The Proliferation Security Initiative was begun by President George W. Bush in 2003. It is designed to prevent the spread of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, their delivery systems and related materials from entering or leaving "states of proliferation concern." A U.S. allegation that North Korea supplied Libya with uranium that could be enriched to make weapons has made PSI a more prominent policy option. Indeed, the United States has indicated that if North Korea fails to dismantle its nuclear weapons programs as agreed in the six-party talks, it may step up PSI intercepts of suspect vessels and aircraft bound to and from the country.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has claimed that the United States and its PSI partners have already made 11 successful intercepts, including the prevention of two WMD-related deliveries to North Korea and one of ballistic-missile-related materials to Iran. However, she left the details vague, partly because some governments are worried about reprisals if they are thought to be cooperating with the Americans.

Some 20-odd countries, including, in East Asia, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore and Russia, have publicly agreed to PSI principles defining when and how such interdictions will be undertaken. More than 20 PSI exercises have been held around the world, including one hosted by Japan in late October 2004, and interdictions at sea are ongoing.

Amid the progress, though, PSI has been criticized for stretching, if not breaking, the principles of existing international law, for operating outside the UN system and for its lack of public accountability and its limited effectiveness. Several key countries like China, India and South Korea have not joined the effort, despite repeated U.S. requests to do so. And even some PSI "coalition" members, like Russia and Japan, seem to be rather reluctant "partners."

Japan seems to be hedging its bets on full participation, in part because of its concern with provoking North Korea, and in part because of domestic and foreign sensitivities. It has argued that PSI does not specifically target North Korea, and it is unclear if it has committed to interdicting the vessels of any country.

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With few exceptions, under international law, a foreign-flagged vessel cannot be boarded without the flag state's permission. Further, it is not against international law for states not party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty or Missile Technology Control Regime to ship WMD components or missiles to each other on their own flagged vessels. And their government ships have sovereign immunity from boarding.

In a significant departure from the status quo, the Japanese Parliament recently passed a "war contingency bill" enabling the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force to interdict ships on the high seas close to Japan if it believes they are a threat to the country. The bill would allow the defense force to search for and destroy WMD on such ships. But this authority would be operative only when Japan is under attack, not if it simply anticipates an attack. Still, China has criticized the legislation as a shift in Japan's military strategy from "defensive" to "offensive."

Tokyo initially postponed its hosting of the October 2004 PSI exercise because of its concern with North Korea's reaction and because its Asian neighbors were not supportive. When it was eventually held, the targets were two Japanese-flagged vessels and the defense force role limited to surveillance. But China and South Korea still refused even to send observers, and North Korea denounced the exercise as a provocation.

But now PSI has been enshrined in the Joint U.S.-Japan Security Committee Statement as a particular area of cooperation. And the countries are said to be negotiating a joint role-sharing document to include strengthening Japan's participation.

Meanwhile there is growing concern that PSI interdictions outside the UN system are eroding the world body's credibility. And without a clear UN resolution authorizing the interdictions, or convincing evidence under UN Security Council Resolution 1540 that a shipment is bound for terrorists, the legality of such interdictions is dubious. That is awkward for Japan, which seeks to become a full permanent member of the Security Council.

Thus Japan's dilemma. It needs to carefully think through the consequences of its choices before acting.



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40,000 Russian Troops Based Abroad

UPI, 20 October 2005, accessed via lexis-nexis

There are 16 military bases and 40,000 troops outside Russia's border, a closed-door meeting of the defense and security committees of the Russian parliament was told Tuesday.

Another 25,000 civilian employees are working at the foreign bases, the committees were told, according to a report by the Interfax press service, adding that a participant in the meeting had revealed that the three "most problematic" countries for the Russian bases were three formerly Soviet republics: Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The meeting, to consider a new draft law on rules of engagement for Russian troops abroad, was convened by the parliamentary committees on defense and security, and on Commonwealth of Independent States affairs, which oversees relations with the 14 ex-Soviet republics that have now won independence.

It was attended by representatives of the Defense, Foreign and Finance Ministries and 'other relevant departments,' a reference to the FSB intelligence bureau.

The Russian base in Georgia is overdue for closure under the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty, and the Russian Black Sea naval base on Ukraine territory is a matter of negotiation. But the situation in Moldova may be shifting. The committees were told that international agreements limit the Russian presence to two peacekeeping battalions, about 1200 troops.

"All other units of the former 14th Army, which means over 1,000 servicemen, are staying in Moldova illegally," a participant in the meeting told Interfax. "However, because the military property has not been evacuated -- and the Russian side is not to blame -- servicemen have to stay to guard the facility."



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